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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002666

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TAGS: [KNUC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [IR](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAN: PM ERDOGAN'S MESSAGE TO LARIJANI

REF: A. ANKARA 2598 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2640

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Prime Ministry advisor Ahmet Davutoglu told Ambassador May 10 that PM Erdogan delivered a strong message to Iranian National Security Secretary Ali Larijani during the latter's May 8 visit to Ankara, warning Iran that it must regain the international community's trust by behaving transparently with regard to its nuclear program. Davutoglu said there may have been a slight opening toward resumed negotiations with the IAEA, but did not press the point. The Turks rebuffed Iranian complaints that the IAEA is politicized and assertions that China and Russia are on Iran's side. Erdogan will likely see President Ahmadinejad at the May 12-13 D-8 meeting in Bali. Ambassador urged Turkey to continue sending clear messages to Tehran and welcomed further U.S.-Turkey consultations. End Summary

[1](#)2. (C) Davutoglu said FM Gul's meeting with Larijani was one-on-one in order to express Turkey's concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program more forcefully. In his subsequent meeting with Larijani, PM Erdogan made clear Turkey opposes a nuclear-armed Iran. He warned that Iran needed to change negative international perceptions by cooperating fully and openly with the IAEA. Larijani pointed to the conclusion of the IAEA's latest report, suggesting that no evidence of a nuclear weapons program had been found. In response, the Turkish side directed his attention to the report's paragraph citing gaps of knowledge concerning the Iranian nuclear program. It urged Iran to close that knowledge gap and end the speculation about its nuclear program. Davutoglu said Erdogan told the Iranians that Turkey does not want another crisis in the region, pointing to the effects of the conflict in Iraq.

[1](#)3. (C) Larijani reportedly complained that the IAEA is politicized and not objective. Turkish officials reportedly pushed back. They noted that El-Baradei had issued an objective report on the absence of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq, despite the convictions of some that one existed. This and other things pointed to El-Baradei's integrity. They urged the Iranians not to hide information from the IAEA.

[1](#)4. (C) Larijani appeared confident China and Russia were on Iran's side and would block a Chapter 7 UNSC resolution, according to Davutoglu. Erdogan warned him against such

assumptions and told Larijani clearly that Turkey would adhere to any UN Security Council resolution that is adopted.

Larijani tried to redirect the conversation to Iraq, alleging U.S. contacts with the PKK there. Davutoglu said the Turkish side cut off these excursions; Larijani later repeated them in his public remarks.

15. (C) Davutoglu said there might have been a slight softening of the Iranian attitude compared to previous encounters. Larijani spoke less on Iran's right to pursue nuclear technology. Several times he suggested that the Iranians were "ready" to resume negotiations with the IAEA. Davutoglu opined that Iran knows its limits, making it all the more important to continue intensive diplomacy and maintain "meaningful" diplomatic pressure on Tehran.

16. (C) Davutoglu said Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon would be the worst scenario for Turkey. Besides the humanitarian imperative of avoiding the spread of WMD, Iran's possession of nuclear weapons would drastically change the regional balance of power. Davutoglu noted Iran's expanding influence in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and the Palestinian territories, reaching all the way to China. Iran seeks to paint its anti-PKK measures as supporting Turkey, while spreading false information about U.S.-PKK contacts, Davutoglu explained. Using such propaganda, Iran seeks to be the anti-American and anti-Western voice of all Muslims, Davutoglu warned, and a nuclear weapons capability is key to these designs.

17. (C) Seeking to explain PM Erdogan's recent meeting with Iranian President Ahmadinejad at the ECO summit in Baku and noting the possibility of another Erdogan-Ahmadinejad

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conversation on the margins of the D-8 conference in Bali, Davutoglu said that President Sezer would normally attend such meetings but had cut back his travel schedule for health reasons. As a result, PM Erdogan has had to fill in. Davutoglu indicated that Erdogan's message would be the same as that delivered to Larijani.

18. (C) Davutoglu asked Ambassador what the U.S. wanted Turkey to do to be helpful on Iran. Davutoglu said he understood we were not looking for Turkey to mediate, but rather to influence Iran. To do that Turkey must engage Iran, he stated. Turkey will be affected most by any conflict with Iran, as a neighboring state and given Iran's position astride Turkey's access to Central Asia. Turkey wants to know what the next steps will be and wants to consult with the U.S. as matters go forward. Ambassador noted that Secretary Rice had not argued against a Larijani visit when she was here in April, but focused on the message he should get. We appreciated the fact that Turkish officials gave him the right messages. Turkey's voice with others in the international community can have impact. Ambassador said it would not be a good idea for Ahmadinejad to visit Turkey or for other high-level visits to take place.

At a minimum, there should be no surprises, and we should consult before any major steps are taken. Turkey should avoid being perceived as seeking a mediating role, thereby undercutting the EU-3 and IAEA. Ambassador noted that the Foreign Ministry planned to send a high-level group to Washington to discuss Iran in the next weeks and stressed that the U.S. welcomed the opportunity for further consultations.

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